

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 094424

FOR POL - HAMILTON

FOL RPT BEIRUT 3472 ACTION SECSTATE INFO AMMAN ATHENS BAGHDAD
DAMASCUS JIDDA KUWAIT LONDON PARIS STUTTGART TEHRAN TEL AVIV
USUSN NY CIA DIA USCINCEUR CINCUSNAVEUR COMSIXTHFLT ACTF SIX
ZERO CTF SIX ONE CTF SIX TWO FOSIF ROTA SPAIN FICEURLANT NORFOLK
19 APR QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3472

STUTTGART FOR ELG

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION APRIL 19: MORE OF THE SAME

REF : BEIRUT 3457 (181014Z APR 76)

1. LAST 24 HOURS WITNESSED ROUGHLY THE SAME PATTERN
OF FIGHTING IN BEIRUT AS PREVIOUS FEW DAYS, E.E.
INDISCRIMINATE SHELLING AT FAIRLY LONG RANGE BETWEEN
EAST AND WEST SECTORS, COMBINED WITH SPORADIC CLASHES
AND EXCHANGES OF FIRE ALONG CHRISTIAN-MOSLEM DIVIDING
LINE, AS IN PREVIOUS DAYS, STRIFE HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY
LESS INTENSE DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS THAN IN LATE AFTERNOON AND
NIGHT. ONE CLASH NEAR CITY CENTER STARTING LAST EVENING KEPT
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UP FOR SEVERAL HOURS. CITY IS GENERALLY QUIET AS OF MID-

MORNING TODAY, INTERRUPTED BY SPORADIC GUNFIRE.

2. THE RESURRECTED JOINT FORCE SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE MET YESTERDAY UNDER PREMIER KARAME. PRESENT WERE SYRIAN COLONELS ALI MADAMI AND MOHAMED AL-KHOLI, LEBANESE COL. DEEB KAMAL, TEWFIQ SAFADI (FATAH), ZUHAIR MUHSIN (SAIQA), SAAB SAYEL (SAIQA), ABBAS KHALAF (JUMBLATT'S PSP), KARIM PAKRADOUNI (KATAEB), MICHEL SAMAHE (KATAEB), AND AN UNNAMED NATIONAL LIBERAL REPRESENTATIVE. DEEB KAMAL IS A RELATIVELY UNCONTROVERSIAL CHOICE TO SIT FOR THE LEBANESE ARMY. HE AND BRIG. MUSA KANAAN WERE ON THE EARLIER COMMITTEE, AND BOTH HAVE BEEN MORE OR LESS NEUTRAL IN THE SPLITS RUPTURING THE ARMY IN PAST MONTH AND A HALF. THE REVIVED COMMITTEE IS SCHEDULED TO MEET AGAIN TODAY AND MAY AT THAT TIME ANNOUNCE TIME FOR A CEASEFIRE AND MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED.

2. MARONITE LEADERS MET YESTERDAY. SPEAKING THROUGH CHAMOUN (WHO PROBABLY INCLINED TO BE HARsher IN ATTITUDE THAN OTHERS) THEY VOICED CRITICISM OF DAMASCUS AGREEMENT. THEY WERE MIFFED THAT THEY HADN'T BEEN CONSULTED ABOUT IT IN ADVANCE AND OBJECTED TO ITS REJECTION OF ARABIZATION AND INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE LEBANESE CRISIS. EXTENT TO WHICH THEY ARE WILLING TO CARRY THESE VIEWS UNCERTAIN, BUT THIS IS NOT YET FORESEEN AS A SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM. KATAEB IS BELIEVED TO BE ON BOARD THE DAMASCUS ACCORD. THE MARONITE "BIG FOUR" (FRANGIE, KASSIS, GEMAYEL, AND CHAMOUN) PLAN TO MEET AGAIN TODAY.

3. UNHAPPINESS AT NOT BEING IN ON TERMS OF DAMASCUS AGREEMENT AHEAD OF TIME MAY HAVE BEEN A FACTOR IN FRANGIE'S NOT SIGNING CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT AS EXPECTED APRIL 17. HE STILL HASN'T SIGNED, ALTHOUGH MOST OBSERVERS THINK HE WILL DO SO SOON. MEANWHILE, PRESIDENTIAL CONTENDERS ARE MAINLY MAKING TIME WAITING FOR FRANGIE TO DROP THE OTHER SHOE. SPEAKER ASSAD'S UNCOMMITTED GROUP OF 27 DEPUTIES SEEMS TO BE LOSING STEAM; ACCORDING TO ONE REPORT, THIS IS BECAUSE IMAM MUSA SADR HAS INFLUENCED ONE OF ITS SHIITE MEMBERS TO BACK ELIAS SARKIS.

4. RADIO REPORTS HAVE NOTED THAT YASSER ARAFAT RECEIVED THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR YESTERDAY. LATTER THANKED THE PLO LEADER ON "IMPORTANT" MESSAGE FROM SOVIET LEADERS. ARAFAT ALSO SAID CONFIDENTIAL

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TO HAVE SENT A MESSAGE TO COL. QADAFI YESTERDAY THROUGH LIBYAN CHARGE IN BEIRUT. IN BOTH INSTANCES, ARAFAT REPORTEDLY RAISED ALLEGED THREAT POSED BY U.S. 6TH FLEET IN EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN.

5. LAST BUT NOT LEAST, LEBANON'S WIDELY RESPECTED "VOICE", RADIO ANNOUNCER SHARIF AKHAWI CAME BACK ON THE AIR YESTERDAY AFTER ABOUT A MONTH'S ABSENCE. HE HAD LEFT BECAUSE, AS HE SAID, THE SECURITY SITUATION HAD BECOME SO BAD HE COULD NO

LONGER DESIGNATE FOR HARASSED BEIRUT POPULACE WHICH AREAS
WERE SAFE AND WHICH UNSAFE. HIS RETURN IS MORE OF A SIGNAL
TO CITY'S BENUMBED INHABITANTS THAT CONDITIONS MAY BE IMPROVING
THAN ALL OFFICIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS PUT TOGETHER.

BROWN

UNQUOTE

ROBINSON

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NNN

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